

MICHIGAN DIRECTORS OF SERVICES TO THE AGING

February 9, 2016

House Committee on Health Policy

Good morning. I am Alan Brown, Executive Director of the Midland County Council on Aging. I am here also representing the 54 members of the Michigan Directors of Services to the Aging Association (county level commissions and councils on aging), who provide direct services to Michigan's older adults in most of our counties. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Our association is supportive of Senate Bill 352 and urges the committee to favorably report out this legislation.

As direct service providers, we frequently encounter clients newly discharged from our local hospital systems that have not been properly prepared for their aftercare needs. Due to the frailty of our older adults, inadequate preparation and follow-up support directly increases the risk of relapse or further medical complications. This too often leads to further decline in overall health status and additional negative outcomes. This can be seen for instance in the all too common occurrence of adverse drug interactions or misuse.

Relapse or additional health complications then result in a just under 20% rate of readmissions in this population. According to Partners in Care Foundation, over two thirds of post-discharge adverse events are related to medication management issues. In a survey of Michigan's older adults in 2012 conducted by the then named Office of Services to the Aging, almost 15% of respondents reported memory and concentration difficulties. Additionally In Michigan, it is estimated that over 50% of family caregivers are themselves over age 65.

The trauma and disruption accompanying a hospitalization makes comprehending the usually hurried post-discharge instructions, if any, difficult for most people to understand, let alone an older adult impacted by the serious illness of a loved one.

We believe that thorough and clear discharge and aftercare planning and patient/caregiver instruction would both assure better health outcomes, save health care costs, and add substantially to the quality of life of both the patient and caregiver. Additional follow-up monitoring and assessment of the adequacy of post-discharge plans would be even more effective steps, but the CARE ACT is a very positive step in the right direction. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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